

CABINET

3 FEBRUARY 2022

TRANSPORT POLICY FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Relevant Cabinet Member
Councillor A Hardman

Relevant Chief Officer
Strategic Director for People

Local Member(s)
None

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care recommends that Cabinet:**
 - a) Notes the current work programme related to the provision of transport for adults with assessed eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, including feedback from stakeholder engagement.**
 - b) Notes and approves the new Transport Policy for Adult Social Care and authorises the Strategic Director for People to implement the policy.**

Background

2. The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to assess adults' social care needs and a duty to meet the identified eligible needs. Where eligible needs are identified, transport assistance is not automatically provided by the Council as part of other service provisions unless it has been assessed as an eligible care need. The need for transport should be considered as part of the Needs Assessment and subsequent Support Plan to ascertain if transport provision is necessary to enable the adult to safely access facilities or services in the local community.
3. Around 220 adults are currently in receipt of transport commissioned by the Council. The large majority (over 90%) of these adults have Learning Disability support needs and travel to day services (both Council-provided and external contracted services) and to replacement care/respite services. The budget for adult social care transport provision is approximately £2 million per annum.
4. At its meeting on 15 November 2018, as part of the "Forward Look at Adult Services" paper, Cabinet endorsed the Adult Social Care Transport Guidance and Procedures. In line with the People Directorate's regular review of policies and to support the transformational development programme set out in the People Strategy, Cabinet is now asked to endorse the revised Transport Policy for Adult Social Care ("the policy"). The revised policy updates the previous guidance and procedures,

formalising these into a policy document which sets out clear criteria which Social Workers and front line Adult Social Care staff responsible for assessment and support planning will use to determine whether an adult is eligible to be provided with transport assistance from the Council and how transport will be provided.

5. The overarching principle of the policy is to promote safe and independent travel using an adult's own strengths and community assets (i.e., the resources available to the adult in the community where they live) wherever possible. Where transport assistance is assessed as needed, the aim is to ensure the method of provision maximises independence, supports personalised approaches which make the best use of the resources available in people's own communities and offers best value for money in line with the Council's strategic aims and objectives.

6. The policy is included at Appendix 1.

Stakeholder Engagement

7. The policy has been co-produced with stakeholders, including people who use services and experts by experience, family carers, social work teams and other officers from across the Council, including Economy and Infrastructure and Worcestershire Children First through the Corporate Transport Board. The policy has also been discussed at Worcestershire's Learning Disability Partnership Board.

8. Some highlights from the feedback received from stakeholders, which has either been incorporated into the updated policy as appropriate, or been considered as part of wider work on transport (see below) are summarised as follows:

- There were some positive stories relating to the use of community transport, which is seen as a flexible, local option, well adapted to meet the needs of people with support needs and particularly important where community transport is available in the rural areas of Worcestershire.
- The difficulty of accessing transport which sometimes arises in rural areas was highlighted, particularly matching the needs to access services at specific times of the day, compared to the availability of transport. Services need to be available at the right time and in the right place, and consistency and reliability of transport services is important. There is also a need to grow the market in rural areas, for example the availability of passenger/personal assistants.
- Carers and people using services stressed the importance of availability of good quality, clear information about transport options.
- The role of carers was flagged as an important consideration, particularly recognising the support that carers provide and their valuable contribution, working in partnership with the Council, to the support of people with care and support needs. The Council's duties under the Care Act in relation to carers, for example around prevention of need and promoting carers' wellbeing, are an important consideration within the policy.

- There is a need for further raising of awareness of the needs of people with disabilities in Worcestershire's communities, including among the providers of transport. The need for public transport providers to make reasonable adjustments was highlighted by stakeholders as an area for focus, with suggestions of further awareness-raising and training for drivers as something to consider moving forward, as well as ensuring practical adjustments are easy to access such as accessibility ramps on trains and wheelchair accessibility of buses etc.
- The need to continue the approach of personalising both assessments and services was highlighted, with a focus on person-centred planning being important.

Wider work on Transport

9. Information and Advice. Alongside the policy, a "toolkit" of guidance and information has also been produced. It is intended that this will be launched in spring 2022, both through the Council's intranet and "e-guide" for social workers and through the Council's external website for Worcestershire citizens. The information available is in direct response to stakeholder feedback, with the intention of providing more accessible information about the transport options available in people's local communities, including community transport, public transport and assistive technologies.

10. Independent Travel Training. As part of the policy, options available to adults to travel independently are explored and promoted. To further enable this, joint work is ongoing between the People Directorate, Worcestershire Children First and the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate Transport Team to develop Independent Travel Training. This is initially focussed on children and young people, with a new service launching in 2022, but with the intention to widen the programme in time to include independence training for adults.

11. Direct Payments. The policy aims to encourage individuals who are eligible for funded transport to consider receiving funding through a direct payment in the first instance. Direct payments are a cash amount based on the amount agreed in someone's personal budget so that the individual can arrange and pay for social care support instead of the Council arranging services on their behalf. Direct payments offer greater flexibility, choice and control for individuals, and work is ongoing to encourage the uptake of direct payments for transport services, supported by the information to be made available in the toolkit and website and the market development work referenced below.

12. Market development. The People Directorate Commissioning Unit is working with the Transport Commissioning Team in the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate to ensure there is a diverse and vibrant range of transport provision available for people to use to access services. In particular, work is underway to develop micro enterprises in Worcestershire and increase the availability of Personal or Passenger Assistants who can act as drivers for adults with care and support needs who are unable to drive themselves. There is also a wide range of Community Transport available across all districts in Worcestershire (see <https://www.communitytravel.org.uk/> for more details).

13. Bus Service Improvement Plan. Worcestershire's Bus Service Improvement Plan was approved at Cabinet in September 2021. The plan sets out a major and complete transformation of bus services in Worcestershire and is accompanied by a bid to Central Government for £86 million over three years to improve public transport. Part of the improvement plan will focus on accessibility of services to people with additional needs, and officers are working to ensure that plans and strategies, including Worcestershire's Learning Disability Strategy and All Age Autism Strategy, are aligned.

Legal Implications

14. The Care Act 2014, in conjunction with the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/313) and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance provide the legal framework for making decisions in relation to eligibility for adult social care support.

15. The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to assess adults' social care needs and a duty to meet the identified eligible needs. Where eligible needs are identified, transport assistance will be provided when the assessor determines such provision is necessary to enable the adult to safely access facilities or services in the local community, and no other travel option is available to the adult.

16. Whilst it is desirable that those eligible for transport assistance should take this by way of a direct payment, the Council is not permitted to insist that people accept a direct payment, and direct payments will be considered alongside other options to meet need, for example, the Council directly commissioning a transport service.

Financial Implications

17. The total budget for transport across Adult Social Care for 2021/22 is £2.053m, with the majority being spent on clients with Learning Disabilities. The review will help to enable the service to remain within the existing budget which is presently facing pressures without reform.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

18. A joint impact assessment (JIA) screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. It identified that further impact analysis was required in respect of Equality and Sustainability. The full Equality Impact Assessment did not identify any potential negative impacts in respect of any of the Protected Groups but did identify potential for positive impacts through the proposed improved access to information and advice, and development of additional travel options for individuals and communities. The full Sustainability Impact Assessment also identified potential positive impacts in relation to increased use of public and community transport. Relevant findings from the impact assessments will contribute to future service commissioning.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 Transport Policy for Adult Social Care (draft awaiting approval)

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report

Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director - People Commissioning

Tel: 01905 844308

Email: rwassell@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for People) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Cabinet Report November 2018:

[Cabinet agenda and minutes - Thursday 15 November 2018](#)